

MINUTES

Blue Ribbon Panel on Housing
September 6, 2005
Red Rocks Community College

Attending

BRP members:

Tom Ragonetti
Kathi Williams
James van Hemert
Gary Severson
Alana Smart
Tony Hernandez
Britta Fisher
Betty Boyd
Jim Spehar
Jay Wilson
Mike Rosser
Mike Rock
Rick Padilla

Also attending: Rick Hanger, Annmarie Jensen

Meeting called to order 2:10 pm.

1. R McMaken summarized the needs assessment committee's work that day. He explained the needs assessment system – an ongoing system of updated throughout the state as well as a template for completion by all groups.
2. McMaken also summed up finance committee meeting. The Finance committee discussed several points: 1. the Blue Ribbon Panel staff must write up a brief description of housing need in the state. It is essential that a credible statement of need be established before recommendations can be submitted. 2. Greater coordination must be pursued with economic development and transportation sectors if there is any hope of success in developing future financial resources for housing. 3. Examine vacant properties to determine any opportunities with land and building acquisition for housing. Don Marostica referenced the Peter Neukirch's whitepaper submitted to the committee. Marostica encouraged continued examination of the paper's proposals. The committee has not yet made any final decisions.
3. Alana Smart expressed support for a thorough statement of need by the panel. The need will have to be an important portion of the report – and we have to nail down what will be discussed.

4. Tom Ragonetti asked if it would ever be possible to have a single unified application? We need to ensure that the work of finding the funding is worked out “in house” as a service to the applicant, much as private financial organizations do today.

Don Marostica asked if it would be possible to reach all of the organizations necessary to accomplish this.

Tom Ragonetti suggested that it would be a good start is just to begin with the people who have been at the table – by the time all the panel members contact the organization they work with, a significant portion of the market will have been covered. The objective would be to have a system where the lenders and granters put together a loan package for the recipient. This would be similar to what Lloyd’s of London does – they put together a large package of organizations that are buying pieces of the insurance risk. Why not do something similar with housing funds?

5. Jim Spehar expressed concern that enough work has been done to document need, and that the panel should be very careful to not give the impression that it is releasing just another study on housing need. R McMaken clarified that the panel will be conducting no new research, but will be making recommendations for action based on existing needs data. T Ragonetti pointed out that if an organization does every little thing necessary to do a comprehensive plan, by the time the plan is done, the plan is obsolete. Best to proceed even if the information is imperfect.

6. R McMaken noted that the finance committee concluded that no position would be taken on GSE reform. Jay Wilson made the substitute motion that the panel should make the point that when housing funds do arise, the state and local authorities should have control.

7. Justin Marks provided an update on recent research into the availability of funds – the lottery funds were initiated through state vote for GOCO and in 2000 ref E was approved which sends excess funds to capital improvement projects for schools. It would require a state constitutional change to redirect such funds to housing.

J Marks also mentioned that other Departments such as the Dept of Education are already looking at Sales Taxes and Real Estate Transfer Taxes to support their own projects. We must conclude then, that any efforts to find new housing revenues through such sources would face fierce competition. Note: The state collected 1.7 bil in 2004 in 2004 1.8 billion.

8. There was a brief discussion on “tax title homes” that the city takes back because no one buys the tax certificate – Mike Rock provided a clarification of how this occurs in Lakewood and other localities. The potential for housing funds from this is minimal.

9. Ryan McMaken presented the 7 suggested recommendations to the panel–

A. Reporting of housing need: We want to make sure we maintain a complete and regularized means of reporting

T Ragonetti suggested that the panel might want to recommend that the state housing board be charged with making a report on housing needs widely available every two years. R McMaken explained that the point of regularly updating the local and regional housing data will be to ensure that reasonable current data will be available at all times.

This will be encouraged through use of Div of Hsg funds to fund housing needs assessments. The Division currently funds over 50% of the cost of needs assessments for communities that apply.

Gary Severson expressed concern that the regional designations be done on a local level so that we can be sure that we are reflecting the local reality.

The state used to do aggregate need in the state- but in the future we want to ensure the data is locally driven and gives us an idea of the local needs as they are locally driven.

Kathi Williams noted that these efforts will also enable the housing community to have a better working relationship with the COGs and the other groups that will be essential in making sure that we have a good local read on the local housing needs data.

Making a completed needs assessment may be a requirement for communities to apply to the state housing board as time goes on.

B. K Williams discussed the reality of the jobs multiplier (base jobs analysis). J Spehar – “We discussed how for every high paid energy job, there are two or 3 service level jobs that are needed to serve those people.”

10. Concern was raised that the report will need to detail who will be implementing parts of the plan, and how it will be done.

11. There was a discussion about requiring communities to outline their jobs/housing balance. Tom Ragonetti voiced concern that communities invite retail, but reject any housing for the workers at the new establishments. Don Marostica was concerned that such a requirement might be used to suppress housing construction. Tom Ragonetti noted that the HBA had supported it because communities wanted retail but not housing. The net affect, the HBA believed, would be to make way for more housing.

12. Jim Spehar – “49% plus of people who have w2’s from Vail live out of county and those are very real impacts.

13. K Williams – “We also need to look at what affordable housing really is – is it 70 and 80% which the market can handle?”

14. Alana Smart – “What are the budgetary implications of these actions steps?” Who will bear the costs of these specific actions?

Panelists then offered revisions to the 7 suggested recommendations. The panel approved condensing the 7 into 5 categories:

The final 5 recommendation categories were:

- Expanding Data Collection & Delivery
- Improving Service
- Financing Housing Needs
- Strategic Partnerships
- Policy Development

[See the revised recommendations for the October meeting.]

Meeting adjourned at 4:10 p.m.